

The Young Peoples' Society and the New Convert.
 Marcus A. Witter.

CONFERENCES

Apart from this there will be held several conferences on methods, the time and place to be announced from the rostrum in main auditorium. These conferences have been provided for:

1. Junior conference. Led by Mrs. G. W. Rensch. These points will be considered in this conference: (1) How to get the Juniors. (2) How to hold the Juniors. (3) How to get the co operation of the parents.

2. Conference on New Methods. Led by J. L. Gillin. These points will be considered: (1) Necessity of New Methods. (2) New Methods for Prayer Meeting Committee. (3) New Methods for Look-out Committee. (4) New Methods of Missionary Committee.

3. Conference on Topics and Leaders. Led by C. F. Yoder. These points will be considered: (1) How to best use the regular topics. (2) How to best assign the work. (3) The work of the leader and how to do it.

I think the program is all that we could expect it to be. It cannot prove otherwise than helpful to those that come to be helped.

W. D. FURRY.

WHY SOME YOUNG MEN ARE NOT IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

PERRY CLAPPER

The question concerning the absence of the young men from the various church services is one of the great problems that confront the Christian church.

Anyone who has attended the services of different churches and of the various organizations connected with them has noticed, if he is an observer, how few young men there are who take an active part in the church work; and the thoughtful will readily recognize in this a problem of prime importance, and one which the church can not neglect without a great loss to her strength and glory.

I believe that the church can not deal with this problem directly, but must solve it thru the agency of her auxiliary organizations. So we are not losing sight of the great question when we reduce it, for the time being, to a Sunday school problem. Now if we would get young men into the church by means of the Sunday school, it is obvious that we must first get them into the school, and to this end it is well to consider why some young men are not in the Sunday school.

It shall not be my purpose in this paper to discuss all the petty reasons that young men might have, but I will aim to look at the question from as many sides as possible and give what I believe to be some of the fundamental reasons why many of our young men are not in the Sunday school. Some of these reasons will be remote and some will be what we might class as immediate reasons. Some will be reasons that we cannot remedy, but which must be understood if we would deal intelligently with this question. Others will be reasons that we must charge to the Sunday school and consequently demand our special attention.

Now I believe that if we will take a deep view of this question we will find that the absence of the majority of young men from the

Sunday school can be traced down to one great general reason, and that is home influence. It is a lamentable fact that the great majority of boys do not receive the training in the home that the home owes them; and the fact becomes a hundred-fold sadder when we must say that a very large number of Christian parents have no control over their boys. If this is true of Christian parents, what can we expect of parents who are not Christians? Now, I will not take the time to speak of the influence of unchristian homes in keeping young men from the Sunday school as that is a condition that lies beyond our immediate control. But the influence of Christian homes, or so-called Christian homes, I believe deserve special attention in this. We may well ask, why are some young men who have Christian parents not in the Sunday school? The only answer is that those Christian parents have not given them the proper training. In the first place they have not set them the proper example. They have regarded the Sunday school as an organization for the instruction of children and consequently did not help along the work by their presence. You have only to glance at the numbers who make up the Sunday schools of our land and you cannot fail to notice how few of the parents are there. People as a general thing regard the Sunday school as something entirely apart from the church. This is a mistaken idea. Some one has truly said that the regular Sunday service is the church in the attitude of worship and the Sunday school is the church in the attitude of study. Too many of our older people are not availing themselves of this opportunity for study, and while they are missing a great benefit to themselves by their indifference, they are at the same time discouraging the interest that their boys and girls might take in the work.

Again, too many Christian parents give their children positively no Christian instruction. They may be honest and upright and moral in every respect, and yet their home is devoid of that active Christian sentiment. The children are not taught concerning the perfect life of Christ. They are not taught the beauty of the words that he spoke and the lessons that he has left us. If they are taught anything about Christianity they are taught that it is a means of gaining heaven and escaping eternal punishment. They do not teach them the advantages of a Christian life in this world but place the reward in eternity. No wonder that some children grow up with a dread for everything connected with the church.

Then there are others who are so absorbed in their business and in the mad rush for gain that they neglect their children entirely. They allow them to grow up without that fatherly and motherly care that is so essential to the proper training of children, and in many cases they even indulge them in the very things that will draw them away from all that is good and noble and pure. These are the boys and young men that are the most difficult to get into the Sunday school

and the most difficult to influence when they are there. Now these are facts concerning Christian parents and we hope that all who call themselves such will take these thoughts home with them and earnestly consider them. Let us by the help of God hasten the day when Christian parents will rear up Christian children,—when there will be more whole families,—families who from father and mother down to the little boy and girl in the Junior society are soldiers of the cross,—Christians because they breathe a Christian atmosphere.

Now while a great many young men are out of the Sunday school for reasons over which the school has no control, a great many are out for reasons for which the school is responsible. Many young men are not in the Sunday school because the school has made no effort to get them in. She is not filled with the missionary spirit, but in too many cases goes along in a self-satisfied way, never thinking of the multitudes who are not enjoying her advantages. The persons in charge of the Sunday school work fail to create the proper sentiment and consequently the school makes no progress, while with a little effort many who are not in the work could be brought in, and thus add much to the strength of the organization as well as enlarge her circle of influence. This is not the neglect merely of the superintendent and teachers, but in a measure, of the whole school. Each one is in a degree responsible for this thoughtlessness, for each one has those whom he might influence and whom perhaps no one else could reach. Now a great many young men are out of the Sunday school not because they have never been invited but because they have never been invited in the right way. I have long been of the opinion that a great deal of harm is done to the cause by persons whose zeal exceeds their wisdom,—persons who speak to unbelievers and disinterested persons in a way that repels rather than attracts them. It takes no little tact to speak to a person about religion or religious work of any kind successfully. It is not enough that one invites a friend or even urges him to attend the Sunday school. The only successful way to bring him in is to get him interested in the work. You know what that means. It does not mean that you must tell him that his salvation depends on his attendance, that he is on the downward way and unless he mends his ways he will end in ruin. Such advances are always repulsive. But it means that you must get him to see the advantages that the Sunday school offers him, without reference to the life he is leading. The object is to get him in, and then if the school is well conducted it cannot but have a wholesome influence upon his life and character. Sunday school workers need to do more of this invitation work, and need to do it carefully lest by their lack of tact and discretion they drive away those whom they seek to bring in.

Another thing that keeps some away from the Sunday school is a lack of sociability among the persons who make up the school.